



A Letter from the Chief



Troops to Teachers Colleagues, Friends, and Supporters:

We've come a long way since the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program began, and the future, I believe, will be marked by continued growth and accomplishment. As our TTT community expands, the quarterly *TTT Connections* newsletter

will help us highlight our successes and maintain a dialogue on the issues, events, and challenges that affect us all.

As you know, the nation desperately needs quality teachers, especially in schools with high percentages of disadvantaged students, in schools in rural and inner-city areas, and in critical need subjects—math, science and special education. There are ample opportunities for those veterans who want to 'serve again.' I am pleased to report that more than 80 percent of those who have received funding under the current TTT program are teaching in high-need schools and/or are teaching critical need subjects.

Some who have watched government programs come and go may ask how TTT has managed to survive and thrive for more than 10 years. Answer: the participants. TTT has helped more than 7,000 veterans begin new careers as teachers, and just about every one has had a powerful, positive impact on student achievement and on the students themselves. They bring a mature understanding of what it takes to be successful in life, how to function in difficult situations, how to be flexible, how to deal with crises, and how to be an effective leader. Those attributes are priceless.

Every time I visit a classroom and observe a 'troop' in action, I am moved to rededicate myself to ensuring that the TTT program continues to succeed, not only to provide our outstanding military veterans an avenue to public education, but also to offer our children the experience of having an outstanding veteran as a teacher. So, to all the veterans who are making a difference every day in the lives of our public school students, all of us at the DANTES Troops to Teachers office and our state program managers say, "Thank you!"

John Gantz

Chief, Troops to Teachers

Chamber of Commerce To Recognize TTT Teaching Excellence

Veterans' Day Event Will Recognize Impact on Student Achievement

The Hampton Roads, Virginia, Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Veterans' Day teacher recognition event to recognize outstanding TTT teachers. The Virginia Association of School Personnel Administrators will assist in selecting award recipients.

"The Chamber of Commerce is proud to support the former 'troops' who are serving again as outstanding teachers in our area schools," says Sharon Dail, director of program development for the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. Other area businesses and educational groups are contributing special recognition awards. School district supervisors, award recipients' school principals, and representatives of military and education communities will be among the invited guests at the awards luncheon to be held at the Founders Inn in Virginia Beach on November 11.

Each of the 17 school districts in the area will be asked to select one TTT teacher for special recognition based on their ability to impact student achievement. Three of the 17 selected teachers—one each at the elementary, middle, and high school levels—will also receive the TTT Excellence in Teaching Award.

Virginia TTT program manager, Mike Melo, says, "We really appreciate this special recognition from the Chamber and community leaders. There are more than 200 TTT teachers in the Hampton Roads area. The reports I receive from school administrators indicate that they do a great job, every day, and they are helping fill critical needs in math, science, and special ed in high need schools across the region. This is the same kind of performance we see from troops across the country." Based on expressions of interest from community leaders in other parts of the country, additional regional recognition events may take place in the months ahead.

A SHORT HISTORY

The Troops to Teachers program started in 1994 as a Department of Defense program to help transition to the teaching profession active-duty military personnel whose careers were cut short by the drawdown of the 1990s. The original name was the Teacher and Teacher's Aid Placement Assistance Program, which was quickly dubbed "Troops to Teachers." By the end of Fiscal Year 1999, TTT had helped more than 3,000 veterans begin new careers as teachers. The story could well have ended right there. Fortunately, Senator John McCain and other members of Congress recognized the powerful, positive attributes that military veterans bring to public education: dedication, commitment, maturity, and understanding of diverse cultures, along with subject matter knowledge and experience. Senator McCain introduced language in the 2000 Defense Authorization Bill that officially established the "Troops To Teachers" program with the primary purpose of recruiting retiring military personnel to become teachers in schools serving students from low-income families. The legislation transferred funding and oversight of TTT to the Department of Education, while leaving responsibility for operating the program in the hands of the Department of Defense. In 2002, TTT became a Department of Education teacher recruitment program as part of the No Child Left Behind Act. This act extended eligibility to certain National Guard and Reserve Component personnel and veterans recently separated because of service-connected disabilities. TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES).

In the States

ALASKA

Wayland Baptist University is offering those interested in teaching in Alaska a new post-bachelor's/master's-in-teaching program that allows mid-career change professionals to continue to work while they complete their teacher preparation studies.

For more information, contact Bill Petrozzi at 866-753-5114.

CALIFORNIA

The TTT program just completed its most successful school year in history, nearly tripling new hires over last year. For school year 04-05, expanded partnership agreements have been established with the two largest school districts in the state: Los Angeles and San Diego. In addition, a new partnership was established with Project Pipeline, the largest alternative credentialing intern program in northern California. These partnerships are providing opportunities for TTT participants to receive assistance in entering state teacher preparation programs, and they allow participants to accept teaching positions while they earn state credentials.

For more information, contact Bob Bartron at 800-966-2860.

COLORADO

"Teacher of the Year" awards were presented by Colonel (Ret) Joe Morgan, TTT regional director, and Dorothy Gottlieb, director of the Office of Professional Services and Educator Licensing, to the following individuals:

Doyle Cooper-Social Studies	Mathew Knight-Physical Education
Mary Eberle-Elementary	Ewald Lapioli-Elementary
Dan Forbeck-Science	Richard Loftis-Elementary
Don Harrison-Elementary	Christopher Szczech-Honors English
Sharon Hicks-Elementary	Burr Tolles-Special Education
James Hopkins-English	

Awards were based on superior classroom performance, leadership traits, and the ability to serve as positive role models.

For more information, contact Bob Leonard at 800-438-6851.

ILLINOIS

Chicago public school teachers and staff met with the Illinois Board of Education in August along with eight TTT participants who discussed their transitions to the classroom. Their valuable input helped state and district administrators understand challenges faced by veterans seeking second careers as teachers. Attending the meeting were: TTT participants Edward and Kimberly Rosa, Joe Hamilton, David Hall, Dequiono Marybury, Dwayne Ruffin, James Young and Jerry Larkin; from Chicago Public Schools: Toni Hill, director of Routes to Teaching, and Lt. Michael Viela (US Navy), director, Chicago public schools JROTC; from the Illinois Board of Education: Dr. Cleo Boswell, director Regional Services, Chicago; as well as Greg Davenport, Illinois TTT program manager, and John Gantz, TTT Chief.

For more information, contact Greg Davenport at 312-814-7045.



NEW ENGLAND

New Hampshire had a banner year, placing 15 new teachers representing each of the military services (active and reserve). The New Hampshire TTT program has partnered with the State Department of Education and the College for Lifelong Learning (part of the University of New Hampshire System) to simplify the certification process. The State Department of Education offers five alternative ways to achieve certification, and the

College of Lifelong Learning offers adult learning sites throughout the state. **Maine** has signed a Memorandum of

Agreement with the Maine Department of Education designating an individual to furnish direct certification support to TTT candidates. A Memorandum of Agreement has also been executed with the **Connecticut** Department of Higher Education, which will provide assistance to TTT participants to help them work alternative routes to certification. A similar relationship is under consideration by the **Massachusetts** Department of Education; hope is for a Memorandum of Agreement by the end of this year.

For more information, contact Don Sweeney at 888-463-6488.

TEXAS

Eusebio Bretado, a recipient of the 2002 TTT Excellence in Teaching Award presented by Laura Bush, has recently been hired to serve as assistant principal at Montana Vista Elementary in El Paso, Texas. Following retirement from the Army in 1994, Bretado received his teacher certification and taught for 10 years in high need elementary schools in Texas. He is looking forward to his new role as assistant principal. "I feel that I can make a difference in the lives of even more children as an administrator," he says.

For more information, contact Meryl Kettler at 800-810-5484.

WASHINGTON

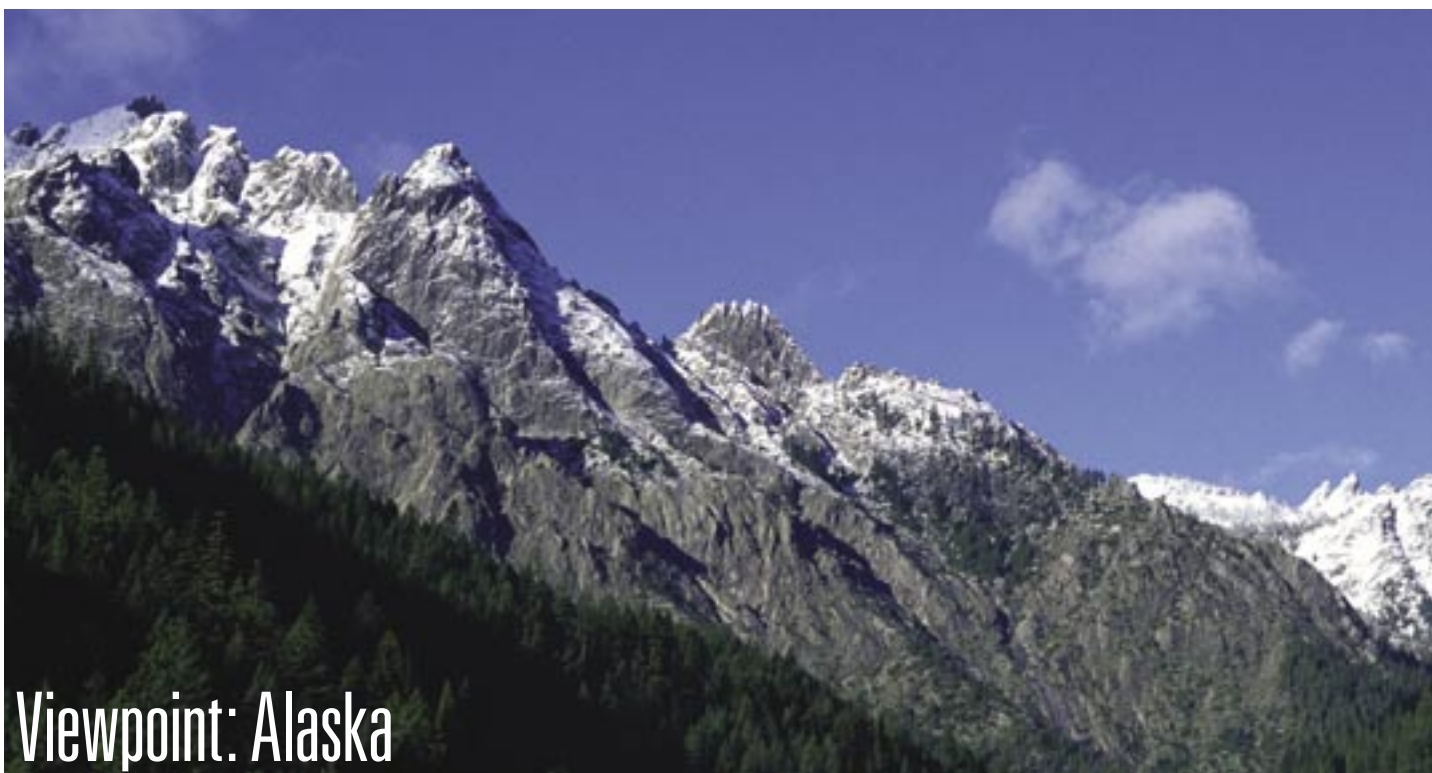
State program manager George Willett received a citation from Commanding Officer Captain T.J. Dargan, Kitsap Naval Station in Washington, expressing "...sincere thanks and appreciation for your continued support of our men and women in uniform. Please keep up the good work."

For more information, contact George Willett at 800-743-2357.

WISCONSIN

In 2002, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to pilot a fast-track, veteran-friendly Alternative Certification Program (ACP). This effort spawned several initiatives including the Internet-based Academic Credit for Military Experience system developed in consultation with the State Department of Veterans Affairs TTT Program Director, representatives of the state Department of Public Instruction, and the five ACPs that agreed to pilot the project. It will serve as the repository for all ACP participant records, student work, and reports. The state will use the data to evaluate participants for licensure.

For more information, contact Steve Campbell at 800-947-8387.



Viewpoint: Alaska

Some Call It 'Adventure'

Alaska, land of three million lakes, thousands of rivers, and more coastline than the rest of the United States put together, is a national treasure. For those who teach in Alaska's one-room schools, in desolate areas with no indoor plumbing and impassable roads, it's a personal challenge and a great adventure.

Bill Petrozzi, manager of the TTT state office that opened at Elmsdorf Air Force Base last summer, says that anyone interested in teaching in Alaska needs a strong sense of adventure: "In the past, some recruits—not TTT teachers—have gotten off the single-engine plane that flew them in to an isolated village, taken a good look around, and gotten right back on the plane." But there is a big payoff for those who stay, Petrozzi says: "You know you are going to make a difference."

A Different Way of Life

With the help of TTT, former Air Force staff sergeant Doyle Horton became qualified and taught in Florida for a few years before seeking a position in Alaska. "I was interested in experiencing something new, a different way of life," he says. Horton accepted the post of principal at a K-12 grade school in Kongiginak, a village of about 400 Yup'ik Eskimos who hunt and fish to survive. The 120 students speak English only at school. "Kids up here are more innocent," says Horton. "They are not exposed to the same influences as kids in most parts of the United States. It's like stepping back in time."

When he first arrived, Horton concedes, there were challenges. He's been snowed in twice and "snowed in" takes on a whole different meaning in Kongiginack, which is 100 miles from the nearest town over impassable roads. When school lets out for the summer, Horton heads south to be with his family in Florida. He says he couldn't ask them to give up the life they are used to while he pursues a career adventure.

You Learn What You Can Do

Todd Groat dreamed of adventure early in life, so he joined the Navy and spent most of his career serving on submarines. When he left the Navy at 31, he taught in southern California but told incredulous friends that his goal was to teach in Alaska. TTT helped him do it. When Groat first arrived in Alaska, he lived in a log cabin with no running water. He hauled water home in a five-gallon pail and showered at the school—the only place in the village with plumbing at the time.

"Opportunities are different up here," Groat says. "You learn what you can do." He has been teaching in Alaska for six years at different grade levels. Last year he taught grades 4-6 in a small Yup'ik Eskimo village. The biggest challenge is communicating with the kids, Groat says. In addition to the language difference, there are important cultural differences, he explains. For example, it is not considered appropriate for children to ask direct questions, so they might wonder but never ask, "Why is education important for me? What will I do with this education?"

State Wants to Attract 'The Best'

Alaska's Commissioner of Education, Roger Sampson, describes Alaska as "a tremendous adventure," but he pulls no punches when it comes to describing the challenges: "You can't buy a Coke or a stamp. There may not be running water. If there is, it may not always operate. At 40 degrees below zero, you never know. Clearly, there are certain types of people who do well here." Sampson sees the TTT program providing "a great match" with the education goals and needs in his state. Alaska has been rebuilding the state teacher certification program to increase the size of the eligible pool of teachers and to ensure that they are high quality. Flexibility is the key. "We're trying to be practical," Sampson explains. "We want teachers who are able to deliver, and we recognize that some of them—especially those who may have already acquired experience in other fields—may not want to return to school full-time for a few years to become certified."

News Briefs

New Certification Site Available.

www.ACT2Teach.org is a new Web site for military personnel considering teaching as a second career. Developed by the Alternative Certification for Teachers program of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, the site is designed for military personnel with bachelor's degrees who have not completed the requirements for teacher certification. The site includes certification programs that are alternatives to traditional programs and information on financial aid. Most alternative programs allow employment as a teacher while certification is completed. TTT funds enrollment in alternative certification programs for eligible participants. Other financial support programs may also help defray costs. ACT2Teach addresses career exploration, resume writing, interviewing for teaching jobs, identifying locales and resources, and transferring military skills to teaching. A section on leaving the military offers information about using the Transition Assistance Program. ACT2Teach also offers a unique feature in its Teaching Skills Assessment Program—a battery of on-line instruments using simulation and scenario-based assessments of existing knowledge and skills to identify areas of competency and gaps. Those completing the suggested activities on the Web site may be granted recognition and advanced standing in affiliated programs. Watch the Web site for more information as affiliated programs are added.

Interested in School Leadership?

An organization called New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) is fostering high academic achievement for every child by attracting, preparing, and supporting the next generation of outstanding school leaders for our nation's urban public schools. This year, New Leaders for New Schools is seeking approximately 110 highly motivated individuals nationwide to become New Leaders Principals in Washington, D.C., Chicago, New York City, California's Bay Area, Memphis, and another city to be announced in January 2005. The organization will accept applicants who possess an unyielding belief in the potential of all children to achieve academically at high levels, a record of success in leading adults, knowledge of teaching and learning, and a relentless drive to lead an excellent urban school. The New Leaders for New Schools application for the 2005-06 program year will be available November 1, and the deadline for submitting applications is December 7, 2004. All applications must be submitted online at **www.nlns.org**. Contact NLNS by email at **info@nlns.org** or call 646-792-1070 for more information.

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